

MINUTES
City Council Meeting
Monday, July 15, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mayor Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening: Mayor Holder offered the opening prayer and invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call:

Members: Mayor Holder presided. **Council Members:** Mayor Pro-tem George, Don Bethune, Bruce Campbell, Rosetta Cody, Bessie Kicklighter and Judy Shuman.

Staff: Brian Johnson, City Manager; Ron Feldner, Deputy City Manager; Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council; James P. Gerard, City Attorney; Ben Brengman, IT Director; Pam Franklin, HR Director; Cory Salley, Finance Director; Charles Draeger, Water Operations Director; David Lyons, Chief of Police; Jimmy Crosby, Fire Chief and Benny Gooze, Public Works Director. Absent: Cliff Ducey, Parks & Recreation Director

Informal Public Comment: Mayor Holder opened the floor to receive informal public comment. There being no questions or comments from the audience, Mayor Holder closed the informal public comment portion of the meeting.

City Council Minutes: Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem George, City Council voted unanimously to approve the city council minutes dated 7/1/13.

Staff Reports:

Water Operations Director presented the Water Operations Department's Monthly Status Report.

Fire Chief presented the Fire Department's Monthly Status Report.

Chief of Police presented the Police Department's Monthly Status Report.

City Manager said I have no updates tonight.

Items for Consideration:

Resolution, Ad Valorem Tax Rate: Mayor Holder read a resolution of the Mayor and Council of Garden City, Georgia, to set the ad valorem tax rate of Garden City for fiscal year 2013; and for other purposes.

Councilmember Bethune made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Shuman to set the ad valorem tax rate at 3.0 mills for fiscal year 2013.

Mayor Holder said we have a motion and a second, is there any discussion?

Councilmember Bethune said we held several public hearings and we heard comments from both residents and business owners to cut the budget. Can the City Manager explain what it is going to take to close the budget gap?

City Manager said we are looking to have to close a \$1.2 million budget gap due to the \$900,000 reduction in our L.O.S.T revenue along with a reduction in revenue of \$300,000 in fines and forfeitures. Our General Fund

Budget is approximately \$7.5 million and when you do cut that much the service delivery areas suffer. He said that is a political question for Council on what level of service delivery should be funded.

Mayor Pro-tem George said is the \$1.2 million only in 2014 or is it moving forward into future years.

City Manager said the police department's fines and forfeitures are estimated to be down \$400,000 and that combined with next year's reduction in L.O.S.T you are looking at approximately \$1.2 million for the next ten years. This year City Council has approximately \$650,000 in legislative contingency which will help to cover this year's revenue shortage. It is the next ten years that are of concern.

Councilmember Bethune asked how much revenue is generated by 1 mill.

City Manager said 1 mill is equal to \$250,000. So if you set a 3 mill tax rate you would generate approximately \$750,000 in general fund revenue.

Councilmember Bethune said I also have concerns like Councilmember Kicklighter does about our contracts and agreements expenditures.

City Manager said we look at it every budget year and we can look at ways to reduce those expenditures during the upcoming budget preparation cycle.

Councilmember Bethune said as an elected official representing the residents and business owners, I have concerns about the employees. The Obama healthcare system will be in place in 2014 and we do not know how big of an affect this will have on the employer having to provide healthcare. Also, I am concerned on how the City can compete with area cities and private companies on attracting and retaining employees.

Councilmember Bethune how would you make up the shortfall.

City Manager said Council wanted the functions of public safety left as a last resort for cuts. He said we would reduce the budget through various reductions and restricting methods.

Councilmember Bethune said \$1.2 million is substantial in cuts. Has staff been looking at how this will be done?

City Manager said staff has been working on it and more information will be forthcoming during the budget preparation cycle.

Mayor Holder asked if there were any more discussion. There being no further discussion by Council, Mayor Hold said I have a motion by Councilmember Bethune and a second by Councilmember Shuman to set a 3 mills ad valorem tax rate for fiscal year 2013 and asked the Clerk of Council to conduct a roll call vote as follows:

Mayor Holder - Aye

Mayor Pro-tem - Opposed

Councilmember Bethune – Aye

Councilmember Campbell – Opposed

Councilmember Cody – Opposed

Councilmember Kicklighter – Opposed

Councilmember Shuman - Aye

Mayor Holder said the motion fails with a vote of four opposed and three in favor.

Resolution, Transmittal of Capital Improvements Element Update: Mayor Holder read a resolution to submit the annual update of the Capital Improvement Element covering the period of 2013 to 2017 to the Coastal Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember Shuman, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution.

Special Projects/Events Funding Allocations: Mayor Holder said we have for consideration maintaining funding within the FY2013 Budget for the Strategic Plan, Fall Festival and 75th Anniversary.

Councilmember Kicklighter made a motion to deny to defund the Strategic Plan, Fall Festival and 75th Anniversary, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem George.

Mayor Holder said I have a motion and a second to defund these three events.

Mayor Pro-tem George said I wish to withdraw my second, because I misunderstood. I thought it was a vote to maintain funding not to deny funding. He said this is funding that we allocated back in 2012.

Councilmember Bethune asked how much money would be saved by defunding these events.

City Manager said you would be saving approximately \$100,000.

Mayor Holder said I have a withdrawal by Mayor Pro-tem George to second the motion. Do I have a second to Councilmember Kicklighter's motion to deny funding?

Councilmember Bethune said I second Councilmember Kicklighter's motion to deny funding.

Mayor Holder called for the vote to defund the Strategic Plan, Fall Festival and 75th Anniversary from the FY2013 Budget.

City Council voted as follows:

Mayor Holder – Aye

Mayor Pro-tem George – Opposed

Councilmember Bethune - Aye

Councilmember Campbell – Aye

Councilmember Cody – Aye

Councilmember Kicklighter – Aye

Councilmember Shuman - Aye

Mayor Holder said the motion passes with a vote of four in favor and one opposed.

Councilmember Kicklighter asked the City Attorney what she needed to do to place no new hires and to place an executive session on the City Council agenda to discuss personnel.

City Attorney said all you would need to do is call the Clerk and ask her to place the items on the next Council agenda.

Adjournment: Mayor Holder made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Bethune to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Transcribed by Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council

Adopted by City Council – 8/19/13